

THE ADVENTURES OF A SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER.

By Howard Fielding.

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"My father," said the stranger, "was quite extensively interested in mill property in Manchester, England."

He addressed this remark to the clerk of the hotel, who sat on a high chair that belonged in the billiard room, but was always in the office nowadays because without it the clerk could not reach the top of the new stove with his feet.

The clerk, who had been regarding the back of the stove with gently affectionate interest, began to frown upon it.

"Oh, he was, was he?" said he in a somewhat unpleasant tone.

"I mention it," the stranger hastened to add, "because I want to tell you what he used to say about the matter of working hours per day, that you and this gentleman were discussing."

And the young man glanced smilingly toward the gentleman in question, Dr. Isaiah Barrows, who sat in front of the stove. But the gentleman was no longer interested in working hours. He was looking into the fire, the door of the stove being open, and he had an eye nearly closed and his head tilted aside with the air of one who meditates upon the past.

"Is your father living?" he inquired presently.

"No," replied the Englishman. "He died last June."

"Died last June," the clerk echoed softly.

With his feet still on the top of the stove, he slowly thrust his head out over his right shoulder until he could catch the eye of Dr. Barrows, who removed his gaze from the coals long enough to exchange a glance. Then the clerk drew in his head, somewhat as a turtle does, and at the same time the doctor resumed his contemplation of the fire.

"I suppose he left you considerable property?" said the doctor.

"A few thousands only," replied the Englishman. "I am the second son."

"About \$12,000, should you say?" queried the clerk.

"Why, yes," responded the Briton, with surprise. "That is about the amount, though I don't see how you knew it."

"The estate is not fully settled yet, I suppose," said the doctor, "but you're expecting advice from the lawyer any day."

"Well, upon my word," cried the stranger, "I've always heard that the Yankees are great guessers, but this is too much. You must know about my affairs in some way. The world's a small place. Perhaps you have friends in Manchester."

The two Yankees shook their heads in a slow and melancholy manner.

"Never saw or heard of you, Mr. Percival," said the clerk, "before you got off the train last night."

Old Jones, proprietor of the Walden hotel, came in from the street at this moment and advanced timidly to the stove. He was a very thin man, who always wore a plaster on the small of his back, and he used frequently to touch his coat over the spot with the knuckles of his right hand as if to make sure that the plaster was not blurring its work.

"Mr. Percival has just told us that he is from Manchester, England," said the clerk.

Jones was about to receive the information with the conventional courtesy of his profession when he suddenly altered his manner and remarked:

"Sho! You don't say!"

"His father died last June and left him \$12,000," said the doctor, "and he's come up here to examine the mills with a view to buying the property."



OLD JONES ADVANCED TIMIDLY TO THE stove.

"How did you know that?" demanded the Englishman.

"I thought you said so," answered the doctor, somewhat confused.

"Well, I didn't," said Percival, "but it's a fact just the same."

"He's going to buy the mills," murmured old Jones softly. "Looks as if he might have some tonight. Don't you think so, doctor?"

He strolled toward the window, and it was observed that he was gripping his cane at his elbow as if he feared it.

would desert him in an emergency. Presently he and the doctor and the clerk had their heads together in earnest consultation, leaving the Englishman alone by the stove.

He remained alone from that time, a quarter past 11, until half past 12, which was the dinner hour. In the meantime several men whom he had met at a fair in aid of one of Walden's churches, held on the previous evening in the town hall, came into the hotel office, and most of them greeted Percival cordially, but some mysterious influence at once took hold upon them, and they strayed away. Soon after they would be seen in earnest conversation with the clerk, the doctor or old Jones.

Percival ate his dinner all by himself and at a little table in a corner of the dining room, and an acute observer could have seen that he was doing some hard thinking. Certainly the mysterious change in popular sentiment regarding him was enough to make any man so situated pause and consider. But Englishmen think slowly, and this particular Briton seemed not to have solved his problem when he rose from the dinner table and walked out into the office.

At the desk he made inquiry for the clerk, but that personage had gone down to the railroad station to meet a train. Percival presently followed in his footsteps.

Passing the postoffice, which is on the main street, about midway between the hotel and the depot, Percival encountered Miss Annie Wheeler, an agreeable young woman, whose acquaintance he had made at the fair.

Miss Wheeler was a fine type of the blond New England girl, and there is no telling how deep an impression she might have made upon the rather susceptible Mr. Percival if she hadn't been totally eclipsed a few minutes after she first dawned upon his view at the fair by the dark, bewitching beauty of her particular friend, Miss Dora Barrows, daughter of the physician already mentioned. But the truth is that after Percival saw Dora Barrows he didn't know that there was anybody else at the fair. It was natural that he should prefer brunettes, for he was one of those big, blue-eyed, yellow-haired Saxons.

When he saw Miss Wheeler coming toward him on the street, he planned to turn about and walk a little way with her in order that they might talk about Dora, but Miss Wheeler passed him with no recognition except a queer little nod that could hardly be called a bow.

This proceeding was so obviously related to the events of the last few hours at the hotel that not even a slow thinking Englishman could be mistaken about it. He lifted his hat with grave courtesy and proceeded on his way to the station, pondering deeply.

The Boston train had arrived, and the clerk of the Walden House had gone back to the hotel in a bus, so Percival remained only a moment at the station.

On Main street and almost in the exact spot where Miss Wheeler had come so near "cutting" him Mr. Percival met Dora Barrows. When his eye first lighted on her, he was conscious of a thrill resembling fear lest she should treat him as her friend had done. No such catastrophe occurred, however. Dora greeted him with the heartiest cordiality consistent with maidenly modesty. He was so delighted that he forgot to let go of her hand at the moment when she seemed to expect him to do so. Nevertheless she was not offended.

"Thank heaven, I still have a friend in Walden," said he.

"Well, it's a fact that you haven't many," she replied, with a directness of speech and an earnestness of manner which indicated that she considered the subject too serious for the complimentary commonplaces of ordinary social intercourse.

"In the name of all that's odd," he cried, "will you tell me what's the matter? Is it New England prejudice against the mother country?"

"It is even more absurd than that," said she. "I scarcely know how to tell you what it is. You'll be mad clear through."

He besought her to be frank and not to spare his feelings.

"Well, then," said she, "this is it: Four years ago last fall a man came to this town, and he said he was an Englishman from Manchester. He was a second son, and his father had just died, leaving him only about \$12,000 out of a great estate. He had come here to examine the mill property with a view to buying it for an English syndicate."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Percival.

"The fellow swindled everybody," she continued. "He pretended that his estate wasn't quite settled, but that he might hear from his lawyers any day. He owed for his board at the hotel. He borrowed money of Mr. Jones and the clerk and anybody else that had any to lend. He got people to cash drafts that weren't good. Oh, he was the rascal for a while. Everybody thought he would bring prosperity to the town, and all were anxious to oblige him. And then he went away, and gradually it all came out. Mr. Percival, this town

was in mourning, and no man dared to look his neighbor in the face. You see, they were all ashamed of being taken in."

"Quite so—quite so," exclaimed Percival. "But I really beg your pardon, you know, for being so stupid—oh—oh—just where do I figure in this affair?"

"Why, at the hotel this morning," she replied, "you just happened to speak almost the identical words to the clerk that this other man used. He and my father instantly thought of him, and they remembered that the detectives who investigated the case at that time told them that there were two or more swindlers playing the same trick in different parts of the country. It struck them that you were one of the—the—"

"Swindlers," said Percival calmly.

"Well, if I must say it, that you were one of the swindlers who had drifted around in this town, not knowing that it had been robbed already."

"And what do you think?" asked the young man, looking straight into her great dark eyes.

"I think that you are exactly what you claim to be," she answered promptly.



HE BESOUGHT HER TO BE FRANK.

ly. "And that my father and all the rest of them are just so many big geese."

"Thank you a thousand times," he said, taking her hand. "I shall never forget this. And now tell me, what are they going to do about it?"

"They've telegraphed to Boston for a detective," she said almost in a whisper.

Percival laughed gently. Then suddenly he spoke of something quite foreign to the subject—of the pretty festival the previous evening—and so, conversing upon ordinary matters, they walked a little way together and parted as good friends who expect to meet again quite soon.

It was late that afternoon when Dora returned to her home. She had not taken off her wraps when her father came running in, excited and evidently bursting with news so important that his habitual dignity was forgotten.

"What is it, father?" asked the girl.

"Why, that scamp has got away!" exclaimed the doctor. "Somebody must have warned him. He got aboard the 2 o'clock train for Boston without even stopping to get his baggage from the hotel. We've telegraphed ahead to have him arrested."

"Arrested?" she cried. "What for?"

"As a suspicious character," he replied. "And, besides, he hasn't paid his bill at the hotel. But the mystery is who warned him. He couldn't have suspected anything from the way we treated him. We were very careful about that."

"That's absurd, father," said she. "He saw right through you all in half a minute."

"How do you know that?" he demanded.

"I know because he told me so," she replied. "And in return for his confidence I told him just what the matter was."

"You did? You?" cried the doctor. "My goodness, we mustn't let this get around town!"

"I'm willing it should," she answered, "for Mr. Percival is a perfectly honest and honorable man."

"He is, is he?" said the doctor. "Then why did he run away?"

"We shall know that when he returns," said Dora cheerfully as she adjusted a stray tress with the aid of the mirror in the old fashioned hat tree that stood in the hall.

At this moment there was a furious ring at the doorbell. Dora answered, and the hotel clerk rushed into the hall.

"Read that!" he cried, thrusting a telegram into the doctor's hand.

"Am returning on 5:20 train with Percival. Signed, Wallace," read the doctor.

"Who is Wallace?" asked the girl.

"He's the Boston detective," replied the doctor and the clerk in one breath.

At 7:35, when the 5:20 train from Boston reached Walden, Dora and her father and almost the whole of the town were at the depot. Among the first to alight were Percival and the detective. The latter had his hand on the young Englishman's arm, and he led him toward the doctor, whose commanding figure loomed above the crowd.

"Well, doctor," said Detective Wallace, "here's your man. I've looked him up, and he's all right—strictly honest. If you'd waited awhile, he'd have brought his credentials back from Boston himself. That's what he went down for. But it doesn't matter. I had to come up here in a day or two, anyway, to see if some of you people would come down and look at a man who's under arrest at headquarters. We think he's the fellow who worked you folks four years ago last fall."

While all this was being said Percival, for the second time that day, was engaged in thanking pretty Dora Barrows for her confidence in him. He expressed himself much more warmly than on the previous occasion, and she seemed to be pleased.

SHIPPING NEWS

The steamer Jennie is on the rocks near Point Arena, California.

The steamer Seattle brought down a million and a half of Klondike treasure.

The Zelandia, with 200 mystic shriners aboard, reached Hilo on Thursday, from S. F.

The American sp. Henry Failing, New York for Kahului, 152 days out, Sept. 25, put into Falkland Islands July 29; leaking and crews sick.

The U. S. N. Transport Justin, Scott commander arrived in port and hauled alongside the Pacific Mail wharf this morning after a trip of fourteen days from San Francisco. She has a board in the neighborhood of 3500 tons of coal for Manila but, in place of taking this direct to its destination, the Justin will proceed to Guam and will there discharge her cargo into the Brutus.

Having finished this work, the naval transport will proceed to Nagasaki to take on another load of coal for the vessels of the United States fleet now in Chinese waters.

The Justin, although an excellently built boat, is extremely slow. This fault may be laid to the fact that there was not sufficient power installed in her when she was built seven years ago. She is very seaworthy and it is a pity that she cannot travel faster.

Apropos of this, it will be remembered that the Justin was the collier detailed to accompany the Oregon home on her trip through the Canal. She was so slow that the big battleship found it necessary to take her in tow.

The Justin had been at Mare Island for a long time when it decided to put her into service again. The necessary repairs were completed and then she was laden with Eastern coal that was sent from South Vallejo to Mare Island on scows.

First Officer Hughes of the Justin was captain of the Czarina just before she was sent out here.

Cook Williams served in the same capacity in the bark Martha Davis when she was running to this port in command of Captain Fritis, now assistant harbor master.—Bulletin.

Vessels in Port—Kahului

Am. Bk. Carrollton, H. E. Jones, from Tacoma. Coal
Am. Sch. R. R. Hinds, J. S. Helms from S. F. Midse

Sch. H. C. Wright, Neilson, from San Francisco.

Arrived.

Oct. 17, Sch. H. C. Wright, Neilson, 21 days from S. F.

Departures.

Oct. 19, Sch. H. C. Wright, for Hana, with part of original cargo.

Oct. 20, Sch. R. R. Hind, for San Francisco cargo 16000 bags of sugar.

Proposed Departure.

Oct. 24, Bk. Carrollton, for Departure bay, with ballast.

Expected.

Sch. Dora Blum from S. F.

Bk. Columbia from Tacoma.

Sch. Mary Dodge from Tacoma

Sch. S. T. Abbe from Tacoma

Honolulu Postoffice Time Table.

DATE	NAME	FROM
Oct. 2	America	Maru Yokohama
" 9	Rio de Janeiro	San Francisco
" 9	City of Peking	Yokohama
" 10	Moana	San Francisco
" 12	Alameda Colonies	
" 17	Coptic	San Francisco
" 19	Gaelic	Yokohama
" 24	America	Maru S. F.
" 24	Aorangi	Colonies
" 24	Australia	San Francisco
" 27	Mowera	Victoria, B. C.
" 27	Hongkong	Maru Yokohama

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